

HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Tuesday 29th July 2014

PRESENT The Right Worshipful the Mayor and Councillors Boulter, Carwardine, Chappell, Chave, Edwards, Kenyon, Nicholls, North, Oliver, Preece, Tawn, Toon Vaughan-Powell and Wilcox.

Councillors Kay, Michaels and Nenadich were not present

C2014/15.34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Andrews

C2014.15.35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none

C2014/15.36 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none

C2014/15.37 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of 29th June were accepted as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

C2014/15.38 PRESENTATION BY GILLIAN MENZIES – WOMEN FOR WOMEN

Ms Menzies reported that this has been a very busy year supporting victims of domestic violence and also benefiting from a higher profile with other organisations. Learning from experience, the group have improved their advice on cooking and nutrition and take up of exercise classes have increased. The most important issue is to help women take control of their lives, and to believe that they can do this, and sustain that control. A major issue had arisen when all Shire Hall bookings were abruptly cancelled by Herefordshire Council, which had required a major reconfiguration of the entire programme as all larger meetings for support groups were in the Shire Hall.

In answer to questions the following points were made :

Members appreciate the work of the group and were keen to see their annual grant funding released. The group is moving towards being self financing although the major upheaval to their programme this year had stopped work on that for some time. The group will be seeking financial support from housing providers in return for helping people to move to smaller accommodation in the light of changes to housing benefit. The group has to deal with vulnerable people being put under massive pressure from the Department of Work and Pensions, with some very inappropriate offers and very short notice of meetings. Several agencies work together to support victims of domestic violence and there is a possibility of cross-over funding as well as streamlining provision through close collaboration, both of

these avenues are being actively pursued. For example Women's Aid are fantastic at emergency intervention, but are not resourced for long term support, which Women for Women are. There are about 80 people "on the books" at any one time.

It was proposed by Councillor Chave, seconded by Councillor Nicholls and unanimously

RESOLVED That the final grant of £10,000 for Women for Women be released and the group be congratulated on the excellent work they continue to do.

Before leaving Gillian Menzies thanked the Council for its support, especially being the first group to provide support when Women for Women was being set up, and noted that they couldn't have done it without the Council's support.

C2014/15.39 PRESENTATION BY SUPERINTENDENT SUE THOMAS, WEST MERCIA POLICE

Supdt Thomas met the Mayor a few weeks ago and discussed ways of managing a number of issues that concern people about the City Centre. The Mayor had in turn visited her Area Management meeting, which involves every officer of the rank of Inspector and above. Supdt Thomas explained she is the police chief for the county within the West Mercia structure, and had worked in the area for much of her police career. Having been at HQ, Hindlip, Worcester, for four years she was now back as area commander. Initially the focus of her concern had been Castle Green, between June and August the warmer weather and light nights lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour. Intelligence shows a lot of quality of life issues, not just straightforward anti-social behaviour. This has to do with perceptions and realities of street drinking, begging (with some aggressive begging) and a drugs death in one of the City's toilets. Nationally Herefordshire is a low crime area and has seen a significant fall in crime even from that low base. Operation Castlemaine has three main themes, who present the most risk, who is at risk and where does the risk arise?

It is clear that a handful of individuals present the greatest risk. Many are currently in the Integrated Offender Management programme. Primary and secondary targets have been contacted and ordered out of key areas. At most risk is actually everyone using the city centre, not just local businesses. The risk is highest on Castle Green, the Cathedral and in High Town with some secondary sites. Noting the good work of Hereford Against Nighttime Disorder, which had been nominated for a national award, it was important to note that these issues arose during the day, not just at night. Indeed drunkenness etc at 10-00 a.m. was not uncommon. High visibility 24/7 policing had been introduced and has engagement with the off licence trade to restrain the sale of super-strength beer and cider. There is also an approach to work with food providers, e.g. community larder and hot food providers, to try and ensure they are not simply sustaining an unhealthy lifestyle. It was necessary to address the socio-economic causes to a long term problem.

The key themes of police action were visibility, engagement, problem solving, communication and evaluation. Results so far had included a strong request from police officers to seek more effective action from the courts, noting that some offenders have collected many Anti-Social Behaviour Orders with no visible result. Some Section 27 notices excluding people from parts of the city have been issued, one person has received a custodial sentence for being in breach of an ASBO.

In answers to questions firstly several members thanked Supdt Thomas for the initiative which has become Operation Castlemaine and noted the additional police numbers and more pro-active approach. It is true that CCTV is key to intelligence gathering and managing incidents. All ages are affected, some of the problems are associated with middle aged men and women drinking excessively, some are to do with youth offending including sexual acts in public. It would be of great benefit to integrate CCV across the new retail site. There is a live link to the police station for all CCTV in the City. Councillor Vaughan-Powell asked for it to be noted that, relying on information in Hereford Voice, she believed there were no police in the city during the day or at night and that the problem centred on the church in Commercial Road. Supdt Thomas explicitly refuted this and noted that others had noted the rising number of police and the centres of concern she had already mentioned. The Mayor asked for it to be noted that as the member who spends most of this working time in the centre he had seen a very substantial increase in police numbers.

Extending CCTV to the Western Way would be difficult, although Belmont Ward councillors had differing views as to how serious an area of concern this was. Out of court disposals such as restitution to victims, had been used frequently, with some good effects. There was also a trend to community sentences rather than custodial terms. However, a hard core of offenders who did not comply with court orders remained an issue.

It was noted that vagrancy, rough sleeping, alcohol and drug abuse etc were all complicated issues and a whole range of solutions are needed. Simply moving people on satisfies one group of local residents at the expense of another.

There is a concern that as crime rates fall the Herefordshire police team may come under pressure to release staff to work in other parts of the West Mercia area where crime rates remain higher.

The Mayor thanked Supdt Thomas for her presentation and she in turn invited anyone with specific concerns to raise them with her via email.

C2014/15.40 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

The Mayor reported that his request for information concerning the donor of the tapestry of the Hereford bull had been successful and he hoped to be able to thank the creator personally.

The regatta this weekend was unfortunately cancelled due to the low number of entries. There would be a charity canoe day on 17th August in aid of the Mayoral charities.

C2014/15.41 REVISION OF STANDING ORDERS

The Town Clerk introduced his report and reminded members that at the last meeting a proposal had been proposed and seconded and adjourned for consideration at this meeting. Councillor Wilcox suggested that in principle the Council should always try and hold the first meeting as soon as possible after the Annual Meeting of the Council to avoid a long delay before resolving new committee memberships.

It was proposed by Councillor Wilcox, seconded by Councillor Oliver and unanimously

RESOLVED

That Standing Order 39 a) be amended to read “shall not appoint any member of a committee to hold office later than the first ordinary meeting of the Council after the annual meeting.

That Standing Order 11 be amended to delete all items of business for the Annual Meeting after e) election of Vice Chairman of the Council and Deputy Mayor.

C2014/15.42 DRAFT MINUTES OF COMMITTEES

a) Planning Committee 2nd July

Councillor Edwards asked that a response be given to the Herefordshire Council consultation about traffic management arrangements south of the City boundary, although it appears we have not been consulted. Members were not able to come to a united view on whether the proposed bus lane and link road were a sufficient solution.

Councillor Kenyon cautioned members to be careful that all S106 monies appeared to be steered towards work in Aylestone Park.

b) Finance and Policy Committee 15th July

Councillor Wilcox asked if financial regulations could be looked at again regarding the limits below which tenders are sought. He noted that £60,000 was the suggested figure from NALC but Councils could vary this.

c) Governance and Procedures Committee 17th July

Councillor Toon observed that this is not on the agenda. Councillor Oliver asked that staff salaries and the progress of national negotiations come to a future meeting of this committee.

d) Community Development Committee 22nd July

Councillor Nicholls presented the minutes, there were no questions.

C2014/15.43 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

a) Municipal Charities

Councillor Oliver reported the next meeting is due in September. The committee had visited the farm the charity holds and approved some repairs.

b) Market Towns Forum

Councillor Wilcox reported that Councillor Johnson, Leader of Herefordshire Council, had attended the last meeting and a good two way discussion had taken place. This had focussed on financial issues and he would be coming back to the next meeting to continue a dialogue with the towns and city.

c) HALC Executive and SAM

Councillor Toon reported a presentation from Balfour Beatty Living Places about locality stewards. It was noted that the Town Clerk has not so far received lists of every piece of work undertaken in the parish by BBLP, this would be followed up. Policy on Speed Indicator Devices is still awaited, it is likely that cost will have risen sharply.

d) Enterprise Zone Stakeholders

The Mayor had circulated minutes of the last meeting.

e) Three Choirs

Now underway in Worcester. The programme for 2015 will be launched in the presence of the Mayor in Worcester tomorrow and Councillor Chave will be back in Worcester the day after that to leaflet the city regarding the Hereford event in 2015.

f) Twinning Association

Nothing to report

g) City Tourism Group

Councillor Chave reported that the Group had resolved a new constitution. The next meeting in October would pick up data on this year's tourist season.

h) Hereford in Bloom

This has come and gone this year, the sterling efforts undertaken by Trevor Swindells and the team were noted, especially in view of the serious effects of reduced grass cutting. Balfour Beatty had done well to get the judges route looking its best. The roadshow was very worthwhile in High Town on the day, and the Civic and Community Development Officer was thanked for her work in putting that together.

i) NALC Larger Councils' Committee

The recent meeting at Shrewsbury had been interesting, noting how another larger council operates. It was noted that they were national winners of Britain in Bloom in the same category as Hereford.

j) New Hereford University Working Group

Nothing to report.

C2014/15.44 DISPENSATION TO TAKE PART IN DISCUSSION AND VOTE AFTER DECLARATION OF A NON-DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST

As no Councillors had declared an interest in respect of the Town Hall lease item, this item was redundant.

C2014/15.45 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Councillor Toon proposed, Councillor Chappell seconded and it was unanimously **RESOLVED To exclude the press and public under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 as the item to be discussed was commercially sensitive and confidential.**

CONFIDENTIAL

C2014/15.47 TOWN CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE

A short service of reflection and prayer to commemorate the anniversary of the outbreak of World War One would be held at St Peter's Church at 6.30 pm on Sunday 3rd August. This was part of the County-wide commemoration of the First World War anniversaries.

Despite notices to the contrary there are no car park charges in place at the Town Hall car park Monday to Friday after 6 pm.

The Hereford in Bloom portfolio given to the judges had given full credit to the Council for its support in maintaining the quality of the displays this year by agreeing to fund watering of beds.

The Clerk asked if any members receiving agendas etc by electronic means had a problem with them being attached as word documents, no-one did.

Having completed the election of Chairmen and Vice Chairmen through the committee cycle, training would be made available via HALC and all were urged to take up the offer.

Whilst on leave the Clerk had attended a meeting of a working group consisting of voluntary agencies, statutory providers and the police to discuss homelessness, street drinking and related issues. It noted that there have been five deaths this year among the street drinking community and joined up action was urgently necessary. Anyone suggesting it was a one dimensional problem with one solution had failed to understand it. There was a strong commitment at the meeting to put something better in place than the current provision, and Vennture Trust were working hard on providing the necessary co-ordination.

C2014/15.48 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

9th September 2014

Meeting closed at 8.07 pm

Signed

Dated